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For Immediate Release:
June 26, 2006

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State housing programs brings new residents to Iowa

Governor congratulates couple who moved back to state after serving abroad

DES MOINES – Iowa National Guard member Jessica Kilgore has more than the nation's independence to celebrate this July 4th holiday. Home on a two-week break from her year-long deployment to Iraq, today Kilgore is getting a first look at her new home in Coralville. She is one of 31 other soldiers and their families who have used a state housing program to move to or back to Iowa.

Governor Vilsack visited Paul and Jessica Kilgore's home in Coralville today to mark the success of the Military Service Member Homeownership Assistance Program. Administered by the Iowa Finance Authority and the Iowa National Guard, the Military Service Member Program provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants up to \$5,000 toward the purchase of a home and is available to military personnel who served or serve on active duty between September 11, 2001 and June 30, 2007. Iowa is the only state to offer such a program, and is realizing new residents because of it. Since the Legislature created the program in March 2005, 31 soldiers have moved to or back to Iowa to take advantage of it. Many of these soldiers have spouses or children, which means the actual number of new Iowans is likely greater.

"I am proud that the brave men and women who serve our country are also new Iowans," Governor Vilsack said. "The Military Service Member Homeownership Assistance Program is doing exactly what the Legislature hoped it would. It is helping hundreds of Iowa's finest citizens achieve the dream of homeownership while enticing former Iowans to return and new Iowans to make a home here."

Both current service members and both native Iowans, the Kilgores chose to move back to Iowa after living in Washington state where Paul Kilgore was stationed. Kilgore, 26, spent a year in Iraq in 2005, and Jessica Kilgore, 23, is in the final months a one-year deployment. The couple said they always planned to return to their roots and were pleased that the Military Service Member Program was able to help them purchase their first home here.

"We love Iowa and were eager to return here to start our lives," Paul Kilgore said. "The Military Service Member Program made it possible for us to buy a home and return to the comforts we missed while we were stationed overseas. Iowa is fortunate to offer this opportunity to its veterans. It has made a difference in our lives and in the lives of so many others."

In all, the Military Service Member Program has provided down payment assistance to 450 service members since March 2005. In January 2006, the Legislature re-appropriated the program, committing \$2 million to it. To date, about \$1 million remains.

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